97-84077-17

Somerville, William B.

The newspaper service of the Western Union Tel. ...

[S.l.]

[1883?]

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Box 264 The newspaper service of the Western union tel. co. Letter from W. D. Somerville, supt. press transmission. December, 1883.
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308
Z
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THE NEWSPAPER SERVICE

OF THE

Western Union Tel. Co.

Letter from W. B. SOMERVILLE,

Supt. Press Transmission.

DECEMBER 1888.

From the library of
Talcott Williams
Director of the School of Journalism
1912-1919

Pearce, 1930 Rec'd

Western Union Telegraph Co.,

Dr. Norvin Green, *President.*

Dear Sir:

In 1880 the British Postal Telegraph System delivered to the Press 285,000,000 words at an average rate of 15 cents per hundred words to each paper served.

In the same year the Western Union Telegraph Company delivered 605,474,452 words of regular Associated Press matter at an average rate to each paper served of $7\frac{1}{2}$ cents per hundred words, and it delivered 55,725,478 words of Special Press matter to individual papers at an average rate of $1\frac{30}{100}$ cents per word.

In 1882 our average rate on specials was reduced to $\frac{94}{100}$ of one cent per word, and the special rate up to June, 1883, shows a further reduction to $\frac{84}{100}$ of one cent per word.

The rates which have been put into effect since June show an average rate on "Day Specials" of two-thirds of one cent per word, and one-third of one cent per word on "Night Specials" for each 500 miles over which they are transmitted.

The average rate to each paper served by the Associated Press combinations for the year ending June 1884 will not be over 6½ cents per hundred words. If the present monthly averages are maintained, the Western Union Telegraph Company will deliver to the Press in 1883–4 about 800,000,000 words.

The British Telegraphic Press rate is 25 cents for 75 words during the day, and 25 cents for 100 words at night to each place where but one paper is served, and 4 cents for 75 words in the day time, and 4 cents per 100 words at night for each additional paper served.

On our basis of an average of two papers to each place served, their rate is more than twice as high as ours on combination or Associated Press matter, although our territory is twenty-five times larger than that of Great Britain.

If but one word is sent the British Telegraph charges for 75 or 100 words, as the case may be. That is, if a day dispatch contains 76 words it charges for 150 words. If a night dispatch contains 101 words it charges for 200 words, and so on.

The Western Union Company charges only for the number of words actually sent.

The British Telegraph Department charges the New York Associated Press full commercial rates on matter gathered in for transmission to this country, while the Western Union

Company charges the foreign papers the Press rate on matter they transmit over the Western Union lines.

The London agent of the Associated Press has been trying for some time to get the Press rate, but reports to the Association that it will probably take a year to get a decision.

The Western Union transmission rate to many of the small papers in the combinations is not over five cents for each 100 words served. There are some instances where it is less than 3 cents per 100 words.

SPECIALS.

If the Western Union Company transmits specials an average distance one-third greater than the British Postal System transmits them, as is probable, then our day special rates would be $\frac{9}{100}$ of one cent per word greater than theirs, while our night rate would be $\frac{3}{100}$ of one cent per word less.

The service of the Associated Press has been more than doubled since 1870, at an increase in cost to it of about twenty per cent.

Since 1879 the Special Press rates—available to *all* papers—have been reduced from 50 to 75 per cent. The rate from San Francisco to New York then was 7½ cents per word, and 10 cents from other points on the Pacific coast. Now the night special rate between the most distant points is but 2½ cents per word.

The special rate from Chicago to New York was then 2½ cents per word. Now it is ¾ of one cent per word.

From Omaha to New York the rate was then 4 cents per word. Now it is 1 cent per word.

From Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia to New York it was then 1 cent per word. Now it is ¼ of one cent per word.

To and from New Orleans the rate was then 4 cents per word. Now it is 1¼ cents per word, and under the new tariff which

goes into effect March 1st next, the press rate between points on the Atlantic coast and points on the Pacific coast will be but 3½ cents per word in the day time and 1¾ cents per word at night, which will make our average special rate lower all around than that of Great Britain on the distance basis.

Very respectfully yours,

WM. B. SOMERVILLE,
Superintendent Press Transmission.

New York, December, 1883.

23983

END OF
TITLE